

U.S. Department of Education
2013 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program
A Public School - 13VA2

	Charter	Title 1	Magnet	Choice
School Type (Public Schools):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name of Principal: Ms. Catherine Lassiter

Official School Name: Forest Hills Elementary School

School Mailing Address: 155 Mount View Avenue
Danville, VA 24541-0000

County: N/A State School Code Number*: 108-0020

Telephone: (434) 799-6430 E-mail: classite@mail.dps.k12.va.us

Fax: (434) 797-8922 Web site/URL:
http://web.dps.k12.va.us/Schools/Forest%20Hills/default.html

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that all information is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent*: Dr. Sue Davis Superintendent e-mail: sdavis@mail.dps.k12.va.us

District Name: Danville Public Schools District Phone: (434) 799-6400

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that it is accurate.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Reverend George Wilson

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

**Non-Public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Director, National Blue Ribbon Schools (Aba.Kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, National Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) or its equivalent each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's AYP requirement or its equivalent in the 2012-2013 school year. Meeting AYP or its equivalent must be certified by the state. Any AYP status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2007 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for that period.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 or 2012.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district 8 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
3 Middle/Junior high schools
3 High schools
0 K-12 schools
14 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 11235

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Small city or town in a rural area
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 7
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2012 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	23	28	51
1	26	28	54
2	21	21	42
3	22	22	44
4	19	28	47
5	28	22	50
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12	0	0	0
Total in Applying School:			288

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
1 % Asian
37 % Black or African American
9 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
51 % White
2 % Two or more races
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2011-2012 school year: 13%
This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Step	Description	Value
(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	14
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	18
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	32
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2011	238
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.13
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	13

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 76%
Total number of ELL students in the school: 22
Number of non-English languages represented: 3
Specify non-English languages:

Arabic, Spanish, Polish

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 52%

Total number of students who qualify: 150

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 10%

Total number of students served: 29

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>2</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>4</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>18</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>15</u>	<u>0</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>10</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>34</u>	<u>3</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1:

19:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	97%	96%	97%
High school graduation rate	%	%	%	%	%

14. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools):**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2012.

Graduating class size: _____

Enrolled in a 4-year college or university _____%

Enrolled in a community college _____%

Enrolled in vocational training _____%

Found employment _____%

Military service _____%

Other _____%

Total _____**0%**

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award:

☒ No

☐ Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award?

PART III - SUMMARY

Forest Hills Elementary School has been serving as a neighborhood school for up to 300 students for over seventy-five years. The community has grown up around the school. Our attendance zone includes diverse neighborhoods composed of a variety of socio-economic households, both single family and multiple family dwellings.

Throughout its long life, Forest Hills has continuously and successfully adapted as the student body has undergone many changes. The greatest change has been during the past ten years when the community has experienced major financial challenges. With the closing of three of the largest employers in the city (Dan River Mills, Corning, and Goodyear) the economic health of the city and surrounding counties has been in decline. This decline is reflected in the loss of families and students from the city school system. It is also evident in a domino effect on many smaller businesses in the community that relied on these businesses and their employees. This year, due to a decline in DPS enrollment, the system will close three schools and the remaining schools will absorb the students. Recently Danville has been designated as having the largest percentage of children living in poverty in Southside Virginia.

Forest Hills has continued to live up to her mission of taking each individual child from where they are on the academic road and moving them forward towards their individual potential and goals. As our data will show, even as our student population changes, we are striving to be a school of excellence for every student. The strength of the school is the quality of the teachers, the commitment of the parents, and the focus of the Forest Hills community on doing whatever needs to be done to insure the success of our students. We are a teaching community that takes ownership of what our students are accomplishing. We rely on data to show us how to work smarter on a daily basis. We believe in teaching the state Standards of Learning but also believe in enriching our students through the arts, physical education, and cultural diversity experiences.

Forest Hills was recognized in 2005 and 2006 as a Distinguished Title I School. From 2008 through 2012 our school was the recipient of the Governor's Award for Educational Excellence. Both of these prestigious awards were based upon the academic success of our students. The Governor's Award for Educational Excellence Forest Hills received this year was the only award given to an elementary school in the south side part of the state. Since the Virginia Standards of Learning testing began in 1998, FH has performed in the top ranks of all Virginia schools and has met the requirements of No Child Left Behind and Adequate Yearly Progress.

Forest Hills' success is the result of using a system-wide curriculum and pacing guide as well as data from frequent formative testing and regular summative assessments. Spanish, art, music, physical education, and technology instruction are part of every students' day. Every student, from kindergarten to fifth grade, participates in the Accelerated Reader program, which is one of FH's primary focuses as we strive to grow students who love to read.

Data drives our remediation program, helps our site-based curriculum coaches assist the classroom teachers, and directs quarterly conversations held with the principal and teachers on each grade level. Data is also the focus of our vertical and horizontal conversations as well as the focus of our site-based leadership meetings. The needs of our students and data that is shared at the end of each year is an important component of our professional development plan for the coming year.

Forest Hills is already a blue ribbon school because we have continued to achieve great success through all the changes and new challenges we have faced without compromising our traditional values, standards, and expectations. We have never forgotten that when it comes to teaching the human connection between student and teacher must be our focus.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

Forest Hills faculty, staff, students, and parents strive daily to meet standards of excellence in academics, citizenship, and community service. Forest Hills was recognized in 2005 and 2006 as a Distinguished Title I School and from 2008 through 2012 was the recipient of the Governor's Award for Educational Excellence. Both of these prestigious awards were based upon the academic success of our students. Since the Virginia Standards of Learning testing began in 1998, FH has performed in the top ranks of all Virginia schools and has met the requirements for No Child Left Behind and Adequate Yearly Progress.

Forest Hills students in grades three through five are required to take the Virginia Standard of Learning tests each year. Fifth grade students take a writing test in March and tests on reading, math, science, and social studies are administered in the Spring. The passing scores for SOL assessments, which are criterion-referenced tests that check mastery of specific skills in grades three through five, are 400-499 for a Pass/Proficient score and 500-600 for Pass/Advanced. Forest Hills strives to have all students score above 450. Forest Hills' goal is to have a majority of our students scoring 500 or above.

Overall performance on SOL tests for mathematics and reading for the last five years reflect that Forest Hills has maintained strong scores in both subjects. Scores for each of the attached documented five years for math for all three grade levels (a total of 15 scores) reports only one year in 4th grade – 2009-2010 – with a score of 89% and a wobble in 3rd grade in 2011-2012 of 78%. All other scores are from 92 – 100%. The wobble in 3rd grade reflects the introduction of rigor into the math curriculum which has been a school-wide focus this year. Scores for each of the attached documented five years for reading for all three grade levels (a total of 15 scores) reports one score of 89% in 2009 – 2010 with all remaining scores from 93% to 100%. The significance of these steady scores cannot be stressed enough in light of the small numbers being tested and the impact of each individual student on the overall score. In addition these scores can be affected by the high incidence of student movement within Danville Public Schools. As the economy continues on its downward curve in Southside Virginia, the transient rate grows.

In light of the need for consistent curriculum and consistent pacing within the schools in DPS, each year the pacing guide and curriculum are improved, using the most current curriculum guides from the VADOE. This is an effort to insure that every child who moves from school to school will generally be at the same place in the curriculum in any DPS school. DPS also has full-system in-services and share sessions to, again, insure consistent quality of instruction for all students.

Achievement gaps of 10 or greater did occur this past year. With the introduction of rigor we did see an increase in the achievement gap between the full school scores and our free/reduced students in math on all grade levels and reading 4th grade. This is attributed to two factors - the increase in the passing scores for both reading and math plus an increase in the level of rigor on both tests. Data was used to pinpoint the problem areas and professional development has been on-going throughout this school year to address these problem areas.

2. Using Assessment Results:

All curriculum decisions at Forest Hills are SOL driven and data driven. Before the students return to the classroom each year, the teacher workdays at FH are used to examine and disaggregate all data that is available for each child. The teachers are given each student's scores for the previous year's SOLs, PALS tests, grades, attendance, and citizenship. The SOL data is broken down by skill for strengths and weaknesses of the incoming group. Attention is paid to those skill strands that are in every grade level. PALS data is also disaggregated to determine the students' strengths and weaknesses for reading.

The grade level teams share their data not only within the team but also with the team from the grade below. They share which skills the students mastered and which skills needed to be earmarked on their curriculum guides for additional attention during the coming year. If the data indicates that a student may need remediation in basic skills taught the previous year, remediation sessions will be part of the lesson plans the first week of school and the students will continue to be remediated until mastery is achieved. Grade level pretests are given the first week of school in order to have additional data for instructional planning by each teacher.

Formative assessments are done each week. Individual skills are assessed and the data from those assessments determine the instructional plans for the coming week and which students may need additional remediation. The teachers use their data to adjust their pacing throughout the nine-week quarters, always keeping the DPS pacing and curriculum guides available to insure that all skills are being addressed.

Summative assessments are given regularly each quarter to determine the students' progress, but also to determine the value of the strategies the teachers are using and to guide the teachers as they make their plans. Summative testing, skill stations in reading and math, and hot spot reviews keep skills sharp across time.

Data is shared in regular team meetings with the principal. Data is also shared during curriculum strand meetings with site-based reading and math coaches. All teachers of ELA and math meet regularly as well. This sharing of data and open, supportive conversations between teachers and grade levels serves FH well by strengthening the collegial connection within the faculty.

The result of all tests are shared with parents in teacher/parent conferences. These conferences are held quarterly, or more often, as the needs of the individual student dictate. The test results are also shared with the students in the form of review and as the focus of remediation.

In addition to SOL data, PALS data, and teacher-made formative and summative assessments, DPS generates benchmark tests each nine weeks. These tests are done on-line in SOL format and also include technology enhanced items and questions that address the new level of rigor in the current SOLs. Data from these tests are also disaggregated on every grade level and during principal discussions for short-range and long-range remediation planning.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

At the district level, Danville Public Schools holds regular "share sessions" for teachers in grades K-5. All teachers of math, reading, and science are required to attend each session and bring to the table teaching strategies that work. These sessions are focused specifically on the skills in the pacing and curriculum guides that are being taught in the following quarter. The purpose of these sessions is to have all teachers leave the session with a stockpile of strategies that can be used immediately. The curriculum coaches from Forest Hills are leaders in these share sessions. The Forest Hills curriculum coaches are also invited to conduct in-services for other elementary schools. The principals of Danville City Schools meet monthly. The culture of DPS is one which encourages sharing of successful strategies, which occurs at every meeting.

In addition, school-based share sessions are combined with regular faculty meetings. Curriculum coaches in math and language arts supervise strategy sessions and share strategies and resources they learned at full-day professional training sessions that are held throughout the year. Curriculum coaches also visit classrooms to observe colleagues and offer suggestions and support for instructional enhancement and improvement.

Forest Hills' has a technology resource teacher on site one day each week. However, she is in touch through e-mail throughout the week, sharing sites she has found and resources she discovers at her other

school sites that the teachers can use to supplement their instruction.

Finally, the teachers at Forest Hills use the Virginia DOE website regularly. The DOE releases pertinent information and resources weekly that teachers incorporate into daily lessons. These resources are beneficial to daily planning and keeping our teachers ahead of the instructional curve.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

The engagement of our families and the community as partners in the educational process is a priority at Forest Hills. We have a strong PTO that supports our academic and cultural programs by volunteering for special events and offering monetary support for guest speakers, field trips, and classroom equipment and supplies. Through the PTO parent volunteer committees, we are able to find one-on-one tutors for our students. The PTO volunteers regularly honor the teachers by refilling their supply lists, leaving treats in the lounge, and volunteering with extra hands in the classroom during special events. The PTO does a monthly newsletter, informing parents about special events and showcasing our teachers and students. They also chaperone our fall and spring dances, work our book fairs, and run our fall carnival.

Forest Hills teachers communicate with every home each week in our Tuesday Folders. Core curriculum grades, citizenship grades, and homework grades go home in the Folders. In addition monthly calendars and menus are part of the Tuesday Folder as well as the status of how students are progressing on their Accelerated Reader points. At the mid-term mark each quarter, interim grades are sent home in the Folder.

Forest Hills purchases a homework agenda for each student using school supply funds. The homework agenda is an integral part of our home-to-school communication network. Not only is homework written in the agendas each day (and checked by the teacher), but parents and teachers can communicate using a space in the agenda. For special events, the principal does a phone call-out on Sunday evenings to keep each family current with what is happening the coming week.

Forest Hills is located across the street from Averett University. Averett and Forest Hills have a strong partnership. Education students do observations, internships, and student teaching at Forest Hills. The basketball team is also part of our Big Brothers/Big Sisters program, coming to eat with their Littles every Thursday at lunch.

Finally, as a community service project, Forest Hills has a Giving Tree located in our front hall that is decorated for the seasons. The Giving Tree is a student initiative that was born when a student asked that it remain up all year round so students could bring food and supplies to benefit the Salvation Army and our local humane society.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

The FH curriculum is designed around the Virginia Standards of Learning. Danville Public Schools has developed a pacing guide and a curriculum guide to assist teachers with their weekly plans. The purpose of these guides is to insure that the basic curriculum is taught. At FH the Standards of Learning are the core curriculum that is enriched beyond the basics at every grade level.

Reading/English Language Arts instruction begins the first day of kindergarten and incorporates reading and writing in all curriculum areas. Phonemic awareness, sight words, vocabulary and comprehension are not taught in isolation, but the basic skills of reading and language arts are applied across the curriculum and the students are held accountable for those skills in every class. Students use their writing skills for reports in science and social studies and are graded for their language arts skills as well as the information presented in their papers. The Accelerated Reader program starts in kindergarten and continues through fifth grade. The AR program develops a love of reading as well as comprehension skills.

The mathematics program at FH follows the pacing and curriculum guides developed around the SOL basic skills. The use of manipulatives in the lower grades helps the students develop a deep understanding of math that will help them apply the skills to problem solving in other curriculum areas, such as science and social studies, as well as in their own lives. Problem solving and application in the upper grades requires the students to be able to understand multi-step problems and use their basic math skills to find the correct answers. In addition to finding a correct answer to a problem, students are required to explain why the process they chose works. This deeper knowledge of math is our ultimate goal. DPS has on-going in-services throughout the school year to continue to broaden the teachers' understanding of math.

Science is taught on every grade level at FH with the SOL skills as the basic curriculum. The students are provided with hands-on activities, field trips, and guest speakers that enrich their understanding of the world around them. Writing in science is stressed, particularly in fourth and fifth grade when a formal science fair is part of the curriculum. During science the teachers also assign the students to work in cooperative groups on projects and to present those projects to their peers to strengthen their speaking skills.

Social studies at Forest Hills is also designed around the Virginia SOL. Students learn about their community, their city, their state, their country, and the world – both ancient and modern. Social studies is also supported by field trips, guest speakers, and presentations brought into the classroom. Writing across the curriculum and reading are stressed during social studies instruction.

Fine arts are part of every school day at FH. Students have art classes and music classes each week. Art is also incorporated into projects across the curriculum. An Orff ensemble and a choir are available for the fourth and fifth grade classes as an extra-curricular activity. Every student in the building is part of a PTO program each year, helping with set design and orchestration of the programs. Volunteers assist with dance routines that may be part of the programs. The halls at FH are aglow with student art that ties in with the curriculum being taught in the core subjects.

Physical Education/Health/Nutrition classes are available to every child from kindergarten through fifth grade. The physical education classes are structured but energetic. Students practice skills or play games that develop the skills that they will need for lifetime pursuits of sports or life-enriching physical activity. Healthy eating and nutrition are part of every day at FH. Students are allowed to have a healthy snack during the day, with teachers keeping a sharp eye out to encourage healthy snack choices. Our cafeteria offers a wide variety of whole grain foods, fresh vegetables, and fresh fruit. Desserts are fresh fruits, with

home-baked goods available as dessert only a few times a month. Students may have milk, water, or fruit juices as a beverage. Even during special events, such as field day, the school-provided snacks are chosen for their healthy content.

Technology is an important resource for teaching and learning at FH. Programs are available on-line for all core areas for enrichment and remediation. Technology is used not only for remediation, but also as an integral resource for our gifted classes. The Accelerated Reader program involves every child in K-5th grades and Rosetta Stone is part of our Spanish instruction in 4th and 5th grades. FH has a 25-station lab in our media center and two 24-computer wireless labs. There are three computers in every classroom. Each classroom also has Mimio or Hatch system, document cameras, LCD projectors and laptops for teachers. The library has electronic readers available for student checkout. Each reader has fifty titles available. The readers allow us to enlarge our available books in a limited space.

Spanish is taught from K – 5th grades at FH. The instruction is progressive, beginning in kindergarten with basic words and culminating at 5th grade when students are reading and writing in Spanish. Spanish is taught twice a week. Our students have great success in Spanish classes when they reach middle school.

2. Reading/English:

Forest Hill's reading curriculum follows the Virginia Standards of Learning adopted by the state of Virginia. Each year the standards are closely reviewed and discussed by a pacing guide committee cohort organized three years ago by Danville Public Schools. This cohort divided the standards into four nine week sections. Each grade level is required to cover the standards chosen for each quarter. At the end of the nine weeks, a division-wide benchmark is given (prepared by the same cohort) to provide feedback on the progression towards mastery of the nine week objectives. The data is compiled by each teacher and discussed with the principal and instructional coaches. The results drive the instruction and remediation for the following nine weeks, as well as the next set of standards in the pacing guide. Teachers also develop weekly assessments to track progress and reflect on instruction. We feel that is the key to student success.

Forest Hills has not developed a one-size fits all instructional method for reading. We implement many instructional methods that best meet the needs of our students. Currently the faculty is learning the strategies for Balanced Literacy. This program is composed of a combination of large group instruction, small reading groups leveled by ability for differentiation, learning stations for skills practice, and guided reading groups with the teachers daily. In addition, resources are available for the reading language arts classes. Some of these resources include leveled readers such as Wright Group books and Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Journeys reading series, Scott Foresman reading series, novel units, nonfiction magazines (Weekly Reader, Scholastic, Time For Kids, National Geographic for Kids), and computer software reading programs such as SuccessMaker, PALs, and a well-organized Accelerated Reader program that specifically targets comprehension and vocabulary. We also focus on vocabulary and spelling through phonics study and Words Their Way resources.

Instruction is provided in a multitude of ways as well. The Balanced Literacy program is being embraced by the teachers in grades K-3. Most components of Balanced Literacy are also integrated in the 4th and 5th grade reading programs. There is direct instruction in whole group, small groups, and one-on-one. We also have cooperative and independent learning each day as small groups, literacy stations, or partnerships. Lower grade levels are self-contained whereas upper grades team-teach giving the teachers the ability to specifically focus on particular subjects which seems to lead to more student success. At all grade levels, whether self-contained or teams, the teachers work closely together to tie other subject areas back into the reading curriculum so there is a constant cross-curricular connection and emphasis on all content.

Graphic organizers, projects, portfolios, and interactive notebooks are just a few of the resources we use that help the students fully engage with their reading selections which in turn leads to a deeper

comprehension of information. We also recruit parent volunteers and tutors who help students who need additional one-on-one. Constant remediation is a central focus in planning for each teacher. Teachers donate their plan time to work with students who need more assistance with mastery of skills.

3. Mathematics:

The Virginia Standards of Learning is the driving curriculum in Danville Public Schools and at Forest Hills Elementary. At Forest Hills we have teachers that participate in the development of the division's pacing guide and benchmark testing to follow the state curriculum framework. Teachers use these pacing guides and curriculum framework to develop lessons that meet the individual learning styles of our students.

Teachers attend mathematics staff development throughout the school year and work with the site-based math instructional coach to keep instruction meaningful and focused on the needs of our students and the requirements set forth by the Standards of Learning. Quarterly benchmark tests are given at all grades levels and used to plan instruction and remediation, while on-going formative assessments are used throughout the grading period.

Approximately fifty-five to sixty minutes of mathematics instruction is scheduled each day. Instructional methods include but are not limited to, Guided Math, instructional work stations, small group instruction and individual remediation supported by the academically gifted resource teacher, classroom teachers, a special education teacher, retired teachers, Specials teachers and parent volunteers.

Students in grades first through fifth use a computer-based program, SuccessMaker, to assess the students at the beginning of the year on basic skills and document their progress throughout the year. Students spend fifteen to twenty minutes two to three times a week working on this program. Once students' performance levels are established the program guides the students through concepts at their individual levels.

In grades K-5 instruction begins with the students learning basic mathematical concepts. Teachers use manipulatives and hands-on lessons to develop concrete understanding and gradually move into the more abstract. Students in grades four and five use studyjams.com, a website hosted by Scholastic to engage our children through activities, songs and instructional videos geared to their interests. Students performing below grade level are remediated immediately after formative assessments. Students performing above grade level are challenged to move to the next level of mathematical understanding. Our current math textbook series is used as a resource to assist teachers to differentiate their instruction with leveled workstations, assignments and technology support. Differentiation is also available within the guided math and small group instruction. These instructional approaches were chosen to best meet the needs of our students and school environment.

It is the goal of Forest Hills Elementary to continue to grow professionally and adjust our instructional methods as the needs of our students change.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

The School Media Center is the heart of Forest Hills. All students are scheduled for weekly library visits which include story-telling, book talks, computer instruction and silent sustained reading. In addition, open library times are available daily for students to obtain library books. An appreciation of reading is encouraged through the use of Accelerated Reader. AR is a school-wide reading incentive supervised through the library and each homeroom teacher. During the first month of school, students in grades two through five are administered the STAR reading test to ascertain their individual reading levels. Students are assigned Accelerated Reader goals for each nine week period based on this reading assessment. Reading celebrations are held each nine weeks for those students achieving their goals. For the past year,

98% of the students met their nine week AR goal. Students in kindergarten and first grade participate in the AR program as they become independent readers.

The Art Specialist plans weekly lessons which emphasize art history and the art of different cultures, while incorporating cross-curricular grade level studies. She encourages students to create art using various techniques and displays the art on the halls of the school throughout the year. Students are given the opportunity for artistic expression and are allowed to explore their individual creativity through painting, drawing, multimedia and sculpture. Our students have publicly displayed their art through the Community Arts and Humanities Festival. The Art Specialist also creates various displays to coordinate with special events celebrated throughout the school, such as the birthday of Dr. Seuss.

The Music Specialist teaches vocal and instrumental music to all students. Students in fourth grade learn to play the recorder. Fifty- two fourth and fifth grade students are enrolled in the Orff Instrument Ensemble, which meets two mornings weekly before school. Forty- four fourth and fifth grade students are enrolled in the school choir, which meets one morning weekly before school. All students are given the opportunity to participate in school musicals which are held three times yearly. In addition, the choir and Orff ensemble are featured in a Spring Concert held in correlation with our Spring Book Fair and Art Show. Fifth grade students are also given the opportunity to participate in All-City Chorus held in February each year.

The Spanish teacher instructs kindergarten through second grade in the Spanish language. Students in second through fifth grade have weekly supplemental language instruction through the use of Rosetta Stone in the school computer lab. The Spanish teacher also promotes the study of diversity by presenting programs on various cultural celebrations, such as Chinese New Year and St. Patrick's Day. Field trips to local ethnic restaurants enhance the study of various cultural customs and traditions. The Spanish teacher serves as the liaison between the school and non-English speaking parents. She remediates our ESL (English as Second Language) learners during the school day and after school.

Our Physical Education curriculum includes weekly structured instruction and thirty minutes of free play daily. Basic fitness skills are taught by our Physical Education Teacher as well as the skills needed to play popular sports. The curriculum not only meets the standards set forth by the Virginia Department of Education, but students also participate in the Presidential Youth Fitness Program. This program promotes health and physical activity and strives to empower students to adopt and maintain an active lifestyle.

5. Instructional Methods:

The instructional challenge at Forest Hills is the diversity of our student population. Because we are not a Title I school, the teachers at Forest Hills do not have the support of additional personnel. Therefore, every teacher has experience using strategies that address the needs of a diverse population. The teachers make instructional decisions based on data from the previous year's SOL, PALS, and benchmark testing as well as from regular and frequent formative assessments and summative assessments weekly and quarterly. Data conversations are held during planning each week. Every grade-level teaching team meets with the principal quarterly and more often if the data indicates a need. The data is disaggregated and plans are made that include remediation, enrichment, and pacing. The data is utilized to plan for whole group instruction, small group instruction, remediation and for differentiation of instruction.

Using Balanced Literacy as a guide, instruction in reading and math include large and small group instruction, independent skills practice, group skills practice, leveled reading instruction designed for each child's ability level, and leveled math instruction based on the individual child's ability. Our goal is to meet children where they are and move them forward.

At Forest Hills, the core curriculum subjects are not taught in isolation. Writing skills are assessed across the curriculum areas. Using Reading A-Z as a resource enables teachers to include social studies and science as part of the reading program.

The Accelerated Reader program begins in kindergarten and continues through fifth grade. The librarian assesses each student for his independent reading level. As the students' comprehension levels increase, the librarian increases the difficulty level of the books they check out. STAR is used to measure reading comprehension growth each semester. Ninety-five percent of our students achieve their AR reading goals each year.

Technology is utilized as a teaching tool and a weekly pullout session with a gifted/talented certified teacher help the classroom teacher meet the needs of the gifted population. The teachers donate plan times each week to remediate those students who need additional help. At Forest Hills we believe that the best way to help a reluctant learner to move forward is by establishing a personal learning relationship with their teacher.

Forest Hills has a growing population of ELL students. These students contribute greatly to the richness of our population. Many of their parents do not speak English but are very interested in helping their children succeed. Realizing how important it is to involve all our parents, Forest Hills has set up a tutoring program utilizing our Spanish teacher and a community volunteer. In addition, our Spanish teacher is a liaison with the families. Our Spanish teacher calls parents regularly and gives them the information they need in order to participate fully in their children's academic life. Forest Hills teachers work hard to overcome the language barriers that historically can keep non-English speaking parents from full participation at school. We are proud of the success of this program this year.

Master teachers, who are continually engaged in professional development opportunities and are using the best practices, insures every child will experience success. Establishing a personal, but professional relationship with those students who need remediation enables our school to be successful year after year.

6. Professional Development:

Danville Public Schools has an on-going, highly focused professional development plan. Professional development in DPS and Forest Hills requires commitment from both the site-based professionals and the central office administrators. At the end of every school year, the Leadership Team makes plans for a one-day retreat during June to review data and to plan for professional development based on the needs of our school.

All members of the faculty at FH have been engaged in professional development for the past two years that involves gaining explicit knowledge of the components of balanced literacy and math. In both reading and math, students participate in large group instruction, small-group instruction that is differentiated to meet the needs of the members of the group, and individual instruction for those who need additional assistance.

Forest Hills teachers chose to engage in additional professional development in writing across the curriculum. Our data from 2012 and our instructional coaches realized that there were gaps in the SOL curriculum guides when addressing the need to write in every grade level. This year we started closing those gaps.

Teachers have all been training how to use Math Madness and Interactive Notebooks. Both of these strategies are designed by Virginia teachers and are updated yearly to stay current with the changes in the SOLs. In addition, Interactive Notebooks teach our students how to organize their note-taking and how to purposefully read for information in social studies and science.

Instructional decisions are data driven and are guided by the Virginia SOLs and a DPS developed

curriculum and pacing guide. Professional development at the beginning of the year focuses on changes that the state has made to the SOLs and particularly to the increase in the rigor of the tests.

For the past two years, all teachers have participated in three professional development days each year. Math, reading, and science share sessions each quarter. Professional release days are built into the calendar for cohorts of teachers who focus on creating benchmark tests and for curriculum development.

On the site level, FH has three curriculum coaches on campus. These teachers are part of the regular faculty who have been selected because of their mastery of their subjects to coach their peers in reading and math. The coaches present information to the faculty at weekly faculty meetings, work with the principal on planning in-services, and go into the classrooms of their peers to observe and offer suggestions and help with instruction.

7. School Leadership:

Because of the small size of Forest Hills Elementary School, leadership in the building is a family affair. Although the faculty acknowledges that the principal is the leader of the learning community, the principal relies heavily on a cooperative style of leadership.

At the end of each school year, a leadership team made up of a teacher from each grade level, the media specialist, and a “specials” teacher meets shortly after school is dismissed and reviews all the data from the year. The leadership team works together to decide on the School Improvement Plan for the coming year. The members of the Leadership Team also help develop a school-based list of professional development that may not be addressed in the system-wide plan.

The members of the summer Leadership Team may meet again during the summer if the Team feels it needs additional planning. The members of the summer Team agree to be on the Leadership Team for the upcoming year. (Each year the Team changes, with one grade-level teacher working on the Leadership Team and the other member of the grade-level team serving on the PTO.)

The Leadership team meets throughout the year at least once a month. If the principal or a member of the Leadership Team feels that additional meetings need to be held to address any school issues, then they are added to the calendar.

Every Monday a full faculty meeting is held. During faculty meetings, instructional strategies are shared, school-specific issues are discussed, and any upcoming event or project is discussed. At times decisions that need to be made that affect the whole school will be open for discussion at a faculty meeting. For example, a new evaluation system was put in place in DPS this year. The principal reviewed all aspects of the new system at a faculty meeting, and then, at the request of the Leadership Team, the principal had grade level meetings so that each teacher could ask specific grade level questions about their new portfolios and their goals and strategies to meet those goals.

Leadership meetings are held each month. Members of the team and the principal add to the agenda for each meeting. All school business and decisions that are able to be made with the assistance of the Leadership Team are put on the table at each meeting. Any teacher in the building or any member of the support staff is welcome to attend any Leadership meeting.

The principal has quarterly data meetings with each grade level team to discuss instructional decisions for the coming quarter. At these meetings, sharing is the name of the game, with each teacher feeling comfortable expressing their concerns and what assistance they may need.

The principal also does formal and informal evaluations with each teacher. Frequent walk-through short informal visits take place weekly.

Forest Hills has a very strong PTO. The principal and teachers from each grade level serve on the PTO board and assist with special projects, such as the Fall Carnival, our book fairs, our science fair, and any other special events that may take place. At the PTO board meetings questions and concerns that parents have are addressed.

Finally, the principal at Forest Hills has an open-door policy that invites members of the community to come to school and discuss any issues or concerns. The principal fosters a climate of respect and support for the students, the parents, and the faculty and staff of Forest Hills. The feeling of family is pervasive throughout all aspects of the school leadership.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3 Test: Grade 3 Math

Edition/Publication Year: 2008-2012 Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
All students	78	98	97	93	92
Pass advanced	27	72	54	47	59
Number of students tested	46	45	38	42	39
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	1	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	3	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
All students	62	94	94		
Pass advanced	0	56	25		
Number of students tested	22	18	17		
2. African American Students					
All students	71	91	93	90	79
Pass advanced	0	55	27	29	21
Number of students tested	15	11	15	21	15
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
All students		Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass advanced		Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested		2	1	2	1
4. Special Education Students					
All students	Masked	Masked	Masked	60	Masked
Pass advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	20	Masked
Number of students tested	8	8	5	10	4
5. English Language Learner Students					
All students	Masked			Masked	
Pass advanced	Masked			Masked	
Number of students tested	1			1	
6. white					
All students	79	100	100	100	100
Pass advanced	38	78	71	74	83
Number of students tested	29	29	22	19	24
NOTES:					
Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested.					
Missing data was not available					

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STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3 Test: Grade 3 Reading

Edition/Publication Year: 2008 - 2012 Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
All students	93	95	100	95	92
Pass advanced	47	47	51	37	41
Number of students tested	45	44	38	39	39
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	1	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	0	0	2	2
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
All students	90	83	94		
Pass advanced	30	12	29		
Number of students tested	21	17	17		
2. African American Students					
All students	100	82	100	95	67
Pass advanced	29	18	27	19	20
Number of students tested	15	11	15	21	15
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
All students		Masked	Masked	Masked	
Pass advanced		Masked	Masked	Masked	
Number of students tested		2	1	2	
4. Special Education Students					
All students	Masked	Masked	Masked		Masked
Pass advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked		Masked
Number of students tested	8	8	5	10	4
5. English Language Learner Students					
All students	Masked			Masked	
Pass advanced	Masked			Masked	
Number of students tested	2			2	
6. white					
All students	89	96	95	100	96
Pass advanced	54	57	64	63	71
Number of students tested	28	28	22	19	24
NOTES: Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested. Some data was not available.					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4 Test: Grade 4 Math

Edition/Publication Year: 2008-2012 Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
All students	92	97	89	98	94
Pass advanced	28	65	53	84	55
Number of students tested	43	37	36	45	31
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	0	1	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	5	0	3	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
All students	76	93	76		
Pass advanced	0	33	35		
Number of students tested	17	15	17		
2. African American Students					
All students	69	100	79	92	Masked
Pass advanced	0	47	26	50	Masked
Number of students tested	13	15	19	13	8
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
All students			Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass advanced			Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested			1	1	3
4. Special Education Students					
All students	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	6	9	8	8	6
5. English Language Learner Students					
All students				Masked	
Pass advanced				Masked	
Number of students tested				1	
6. white					
All students	100	95	100	100	94
Pass advanced	42	74	82	97	56
Number of students tested	24	19	17	30	18
NOTES: Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested. Missing data was not available.					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4 Test: Grade 4 Reading

Edition/Publication Year: 2008-2012 Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
All students	95	97	89	93	97
Pass advanced	55	39	43	69	74
Number of students tested	41	37	37	45	31
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	3	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
All students	89	93	82		
Pass advanced	50	21	24		
Number of students tested	18	15	17		
2. African American Students					
All students	79	93	84	77	Masked
Pass advanced	43	21	11	38	Masked
Number of students tested	14	15	19	13	8
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
All students	Masked	Masked		Masked	Masked
Pass advanced	Masked	Masked		Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	1	2		1	3
4. Special Education Students					
All students	84	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass advanced	42	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	12	7	9	8	6
5. English Language Learner Students					
All students				Masked	
Pass advanced				Masked	
Number of students tested				1	
6. white					
All students	100	100	94	100	100
Pass advanced	58	47	78	83	83
Number of students tested	24	19	18	30	18
NOTES: Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested. Missing data was not available.					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 5 Test: Grade 5 Math

Edition/Publication Year: 2008 - 2013 Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
All students	92	100	98	100	97
Pass advanced	27	72	68	83	76
Number of students tested	38	40	44	29	39
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	1	0	1	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	3	0	3	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
All students	88	100	94		
Pass advanced	6	44	53		
Number of students tested	17	17	17		
2. African American Students					
All students	80	100	93	Masked	91
Pass advanced	0	41	29	Masked	36
Number of students tested	16	18	14	6	12
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
All students			Masked	Masked	
Pass advanced			Masked	Masked	
Number of students tested			1	3	
4. Special Education Students					
All students	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	6	9	8	6	5
5. English Language Learner Students					
All students					
Pass advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. white					
All students	100	100	100	100	100
Pass advanced	45	95	86	89	92
Number of students tested	20	20	29	18	26
NOTES: Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested. Missing data was not available.					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 5 Test: Grade 5 Reading

Edition/Publication Year: 2008 - 2012 Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
All students	100	100	100	95	100
Pass advanced	55	90	64	64	88
Number of students tested	38	40	43	31	39
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	1	0	1	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	3	0	3	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
All students	94	89	88		
Pass advanced	35	24	31		
Number of students tested	17	17	16		
2. African American Students					
All students	94	89	79	Masked	91
Pass advanced	19	22	14	Masked	18
Number of students tested	16	18	14	7	12
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
All students			Masked	Masked	
Pass advanced			Masked	Masked	
Number of students tested			1	3	
4. Special Education Students					
All students	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	6	9	8	7	5
5. English Language Learner Students					
All students			Masked		
Pass advanced			Masked		
Number of students tested			1		
6. white					
All students	100	100	100	95	100
Pass advanced	55	90	64	74	88
Number of students tested	20	20	28	19	26
NOTES: Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested. Missing data was not available.					